

*Conway*

# THE HOLY HOUSE

...OF...

## LORETO.

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A REJOINDER.



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## THE HOLY HOUSE OF LORETO.\*

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BY BERTRAND L. CONWAY, C. S. P.

While giving missions to non-Catholics in many of our large cities, I have frequently been questioned, through the medium of the Question Box, about the Holy House of Loreto. Intelligent laymen — both Catholic and non Catholic, have again and again denied the alleged translation of the Holy House from Nazareth to Dalmatia and Italy, either on the score of its intrinsic improbability, or because of the lack of historical evidence. I remember especially the indignation of one university professor — a Catholic — who had been informed by his pastor that a denial of this fact showed a great lack of faith, and evidenced the taint of “liberalism.”

Some Catholics honestly believe that to call in question the legend of the Holy House is equivalent to questioning the authority of the Church. They will ask triumphantly: Has not this fact the sanction of various Popes who have granted numerous indulgences to the shrine of Loreto, and have set aside a special Mass and Office, on December 10, to commemorate the feast of the translation? Have not many miracles been worked at Loreto through the Blessed Virgin's powerful intercession?

The miracles worked at Loreto no more prove the

\* Leopoldo de Feis.—“La Santa Casa di Nazareth ed il Santuario di Loreto.” *Rassegna Nazionale*, January, 1905. Boudinhon — “La Sainte Maison de Loreto.” *Revue du Clerge Francais*, September 15, 1905. Angelita. — *Virginis Loretane Historia*, Caillau. — *Histoire Critique et Religieuse de Notre Dame de Loreto*. Gosselin.—*Instructions sur les principales fetes de l'Eglise*. Vol. III. Appendix. Grillot.—*La Sainte Maison de Loreto*. Marlorett.—*Trattato istorico della Santa Casa Nazarena*. Fursellini.—*Laur-etanae Historiae*. Lib. V. Vogel.—*De Ecclesiis Recanatensi et Laurentana*.

fact of the miraculous translation of the Holy House, than the Miracles wrought at St. Anne de Beaupre, near Quebec, prove the authenticity of that special relic of St. Anne. They are the reward of the faith and piety of the faithful, and do not *per se* decide questions of historical fact.

As for the papal utterances, we notice that no mention is made of the miraculous translation in the many documents that emanated from Rome in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Although the miracle is supposed to have taken place in 1291, the first Pope to mention it is Julius II., in 1507, and he merely speaks of it as a pious legend: "*Ut pie creditur et fama est.*" The feast does not figure in the Office until 1632, and was not made universal until 1719. Every intelligent Catholic knows that the fact of a Mass being said in honor of the Holy House by no means constitutes an historical proof. Benedict XIV., the first Pope who attempts, as a private theologian, to prove the miraculous translation,\* cites those who hold the contrary opinion without blaming them in the least. The Church by such action intends merely to foster the popular devotion to the Mother of God.

I have heard others say that the discussion of such questions has a tendency to disturb the simple faith of the people. I readily admit that one must always be careful not to destroy the faith of simple souls, while combating the superstition that may be closely intertwined with it, but the Church, as the divine witness to God's eternal truths, does not wish her devotions any more than her dogmas to be defended by unverified historical statements. It is surely far

\* Benedict XIV. *De Festis Beatae Mariae Virginis.* Chapter xvi.

better to have the truth in such matters come from those who strongly uphold the devotion that is independent of the legend which popular fancy has woven around it, than from those outside the Church who deny both devotion and legend.

The present paper is merely a brief summary of the arguments of the learned Barnabite, De Feis, in the *Rassegna Nazionale*, January, 1905. He declares, from the standpoint of historical criticism, that the so-called translation of the Holy House of Loreto is merely a popular legend without any foundation in fact.

The story of the Holy House in brief is as follows: On the night of May 9, 1291, the Holy House of the Blessed Virgin, at Nazareth, was carried by angels to Tersatz (Tersatto), near Fiume, in Dalmatia; on the night of December 10, 1294, owing to the lack of faith of the Dalmatians, it was again carried across the Adriatic to Recanati, in Italy, a little town one mile from the coast; in August, 1295, it was carried a third time to the top of a hill near by belonging to two brothers; soon afterwards, owing to their constant quarreling, it was carried a fourth time to another part of the town, where it still remains.

Some, of course, have questioned this story on account of its intrinsic improbability. It is true that such a miracle is unique in the history of Christianity, and resembles rather the stories of the Apocryphal Gospels and the abandoned legends of the Middle Ages than the true miracles of our Savior and his saints. The average Christian is apt to be skeptical when he is told that a house traveled from the East to the West many hundred miles, and then for over four years kept on moving from place to place, until it at last found a definite resting place. But in an historical question we do not ask whether such a



miracle is becoming God's dignity or not, but simply : Is there any historical evidence that this so-called translation ever took place?

Since the seventeenth century competent Catholic scholars have denied it on purely historical grounds. They have pronounced it a purely popular legend for three reasons :

1. The sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin at Loreto was in existence long before the so-called translation of 1231.

2. There is no contemporary evidence whatever of the pretended translation.

3. Many pilgrims to the Holy Land, from the seventh to the seventeenth century, visited the house of the Blessed Virgin at Nazareth, and their accounts prove :

- (a) That the house at Loreto and the house at Nazareth are not identical.

- (b) That the house at Nazareth was still in Nazareth long after its pretended translation to Italy.

## I.

Father De Feis mentions several documents of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (1193, 1194, 1260) which speak of the Blessed Virgin's shrine at Loreto. The papal documents gathered together by Vogel \* prove clearly that the shrine at Loreto was venerated long before the close of the thirteenth century, when the angels are supposed to have taken it from Nazareth. Moreover, the older Popes (Urban VI., Boniface IX., Eugenius IV., Paul II., Sixtus IV.), who granted indulgences and privileges to the shrine of Loreto, either do not mention the translation at all, or refer to it as a pious opinion (Julius II., Paul III.)

\* *Opus cit.*



## II.

The first account of the translation of the Holy House is found in the *Virginis Lauretanae Historia*, written by the secretary of the city of Recanati, Jerome Angelita, in 1525. All later works on the translation are taken from this source. All our knowledge, therefore, of the fact can be reduced to one author, who wrote two hundred and thirty-four years after the event. Angelita quotes no documents, save the apocryphal annals of Fiume, which no one ever saw or quoted. The popular tradition itself cannot be traced back beyond the closing years of the fifteenth century.

This is most extraordinary, historically speaking, for the supposed translation took place in the time of Boniface VIII., an epoch of historical writing. We know how quickly the news of the Jubilee of 1300 spread all over the Europe of that day. Surely such a stupendous miracle would have been known in a short time in every corner of the Catholic world, and frequent mention would have been made of it in the chronicles of the day, in the annals of the cities of Tersatz, Fiume, or Recanati, in the popular books of piety, in the collections of miracles attributed to the Blessed Virgin, in the appeals to Rome from Loreto asking for special favors, in the replies of the Popes to these appeals, etc. In all the many documents of the period there is not a single mention of the translation, a fairly good negative argument that the world had not as yet heard of it.

The words of the Blessed Virgin to the Bishop of Tersatz—history knows of no such bishop—are worth considering here, as bearing evident ear-marks of the fanciful popular legend. They are translated from Tursellini : \*

\* *Opus cit.*

“I wish you to know that the chapel recently carried into your country is the very house in which I was born and raised. There, at the words of the Angel Gabriel, I conceived my divine Son by the power of the Holy Ghost. There the Word was made flesh. After our death (*i. e.*, the death of the Blessed Virgin and her Son), the Apostles consecrated this house, illustrious on account of these mysteries, and celebrated the holy sacrifice. The altar carried with the house is the very one that the Apostle Peter built. The crucifix upon it was placed there by the Apostles themselves. The cedar statue of myself and the Infant Jesus is the work of St. Luke, the Evangelist; a likeness as perfect as mortal could make. This was possible because he was constantly with us. The Holy House, for centuries so highly honoured, now that the true faith and worship have ceased in Nazareth, has come to your shores. Do not doubt it. It is the work of God, to whom nothing is impossible. I wish you to announce it to the world, and as a reward I give you back your health.”

Tursellini (1597) has retouched the account of Angelita (1525), omitting some details that were too evidently borrowed from the Apocryphal Gospels, as, for example, the beautiful legend of the rod of Joseph which blossomed at his espousals with the Blessed Virgin. We notice later on, in the nineteenth century, that Gosselin omits all mention of the altar, statue, crucifix, etc. This is the general history of all legends — the later historian omits all details that he thinks are too much at variance with well-known historical facts.

The whole account of this vision is full of impossible statements. The Abbe Boudinhon says of it: “One sees too plainly the evident aim of the writer to group together every possible feature of the

Gospel story, so as to augment the dignity and glory of the Blessed Virgin's house. The Gospels, on the contrary, do not leave us under the impression that the Blessed Virgin raised her divine Son in her own house, but rather in St. Joseph's. The Acts of the Apostles give not the slightest hint that the Apostles lived at Nazareth. The consecration of this chapel, the erection of the altar by St. Peter, the placing of the crucifix by the Apostles, the attributing of the statue \* to St. Luke, the guaranteed likeness of the Infant Jesus, whom St. Luke certainly never saw in his mother's arms; these impossible statements could never have come from the Blessed Mother of God. But the legendary vision never concerns itself in the least with historical facts. †

Angelita makes mention of two embassies sent to verify the fact of the translation; the first (1291) of four persons from Dalmatia to Nazareth, and the second (1294) of sixteen men from Recanati to Tersatz and Nazareth. Everything, of course, turns out as they desire; they learn that the house has disappeared, they see the very foundations of it at Nazareth, etc.

The only difficulty about both these proofs is the fact that the house was frequently seen at Nazareth for hundreds of years afterwards. Besides, although the Governor of Dalmatia sent one of the embassies, and although both commissions drew up official accounts of their evidence, there is not a word extant regarding them in the archives of Tersatz, Fiume, or Recanati, or the slightest tradition in the Holy Land of any such visit.

\* No pilgrim to the house of the Blessed Virgin at Nazareth ever alludes to this statue, which is probably of the fourteenth century.

† *Revue du Clerge Francais*. Vol. VLIV. P. 123.



All the evidence, therefore, contained in the original account is evidently made out of whole cloth. Strange indeed that a writer of the sixteenth century should have to use such worthless testimony to prove a fact, which the whole world ought to have known for over two hundred years. If such a miracle had really taken place, some one would have chronicled it long before.

### III.

The strongest argument against the translation of the Holy House is drawn from the *itineraria* of the pilgrims to Nazareth from the seventh to the seventeenth century. Among those who visited the House of the Blessed Virgin and described it are : \* Antoninus Martyr (570), Adamnan (670), Willibold (775), Daniel (1154), Phocas (1185), William Baldensel and Ludolphus (1336), Nicholas de Poggibonsi (1345), Leonardo Frescobaldi (1384), George Gucci and Sigoli (1384), Rustici (1425), San Severino (1458), an anonymous writer at Venice (1520), Suriano (1480-1514), John Cotovic (1598), Pietro della Valle (1616), and Quaresmius (1620).

From the testimony of these writers we learn conclusively that the Holy House of the Blessed Virgin, which was in Nazareth hundreds of years before the alleged translation, remained there hundreds of years afterwards. We may, therefore, ask with the celebrated Franciscan, Quaresimus : How could the Holy House be in both the East and West at the same time ? Nearly 150 years before him, Suriano, who made three visits to the Holy Land (1480-1514), spoke of the ignorant people of his day who falsely declared the Holy House of Loreto to be the authentic house of

\* For their exact words see the articles of De Feis and Boudinhon above cited.

the Blessed Virgin. He declared that the house he had himself seen at Nazareth was made of different materials altogether, and could not have been carried away without carrying away the rock of which it formed a part.

Similar testimony is borne by the other pilgrims to the Holy Land.

How, then, are we to explain the origin of this legend, for such it undoubtedly is? We know that it was a common custom in the Middle Ages to reproduce in the West the sanctuaries of the Holy Land. St. Stephen's Church, at Bologna, for example, has several of these sanctuaries, just as the Franciscan Church near Washington, has in our day. Devout Catholics wished to picture vividly the places made sacred by the Redeemer, and so they erected shrines that would call to mind Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Holy Sepulchre, etc. This desire accounts for the origin of the Stations of the Cross.

The Holy House of Loreto is most probably a shrine of this sort, erected by some pious pilgrims after a visit to our Lady's house at Nazareth. This chapel, in existence at least since 1193, became in the course of time, a place of pilgrimage. God was pleased to reward the faith of his people by numerous miracles. Gradually the people in their fervor began to confound the fac-simile with the original. There is no need of accusing anyone of bad faith.

We close with the words of the Abbe Boudinhon : "Neither the authority of the Church nor the piety of the faithful can suffer from this conclusion. Not the first, because she does not concern herself with historical questions of this sort, and she has no interest in the spread of legends; not the second, for true piety is always based on truth. Even though Loreto is not the house of the Blessed Virgin, it will

ever remain her special shrine. What difference does it make whether or not we can say at Loreto or at Nazareth: '*Here* the Word was made flesh,' provided the Christian enliven his faith and increase his piety by meditating upon the sublime doctrine of the Incarnation: '*The Word was made flesh,*' and dwelt among us '”





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## THE HOLY HOUSE OF LORETO.

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In an article on this subject in the November number of the *Catholic World*, Father Bertrand Conway confidently affirms that all the evidence contained in the original account of the translation of the Holy House is "evidently made out of whole cloth." Father Conway's good faith is unquestioned, and his motives are doubtless of the best. But his conclusions are disputable. The datas and proofs are drawn, as he is careful to tell us, from an article in the *Rassegna Nazionale*, by the Barnabite Father, De Feis; and of these more anon. Some observations of his own in way of preface first call for a word of comment.

### I.

Intelligent laymen, Catholic and non-Catholic, have been known by Father Conway to deny the translation of the Holy House (1) on the score of its intrinsic improbability, (2) because of the lack of historical evidence. The intrinsic improbability of the thing, viewed in the natural order, is freely granted. Indeed, natural agency might well be deemed unequal to the task. But surely there is nothing improbable in the idea of its having been compassed by supernatural power. In miraculous occurrences, says St. Augustine, the whole reason of the thing done is the power of Him who does it. And this particular miracle involves less difficulty, and therefore less intrinsic improbability, than the run of miracles recorded in Holy Writ. As for the lack

of historical evidence, we shall come to that by and by. In the meantime we shall do well to consider that there is far greater lack of historical evidence for the translation of the Virgin herself, body and soul, from earth to heaven, than there is for the translation to Loreto of the lowly cottage in which she dwelt at Nazareth.

2. With all deference to Father Conway I maintain that there is question of the authority of the Church in this case. The authoritative judgment of the Holy See is in question. Pope after Pope has solemnly pronounced the House of Loreto to be that in which the Word was made flesh, and declared it to have been brought thither by the ministry of angels. Of course, the judgment, whether we consider the matter or the form of it, has not the character of an infallible utterance. But it is authoritative.\*

\* The last of the Popes to speak on the subject was the late Leo XIII., whose learning and literary gifts have made him the admiration of our age. In an Apostolic Letter, written on occasion of the sixth centenary of the translation of the Holy House, he says, among other things: "No sooner was [the Holy House], as the annals of the Church bear witness, brought over miraculously into Italy, in pursuance of a most benign counsel of God, and exposed to the veneration of the faithful on the hills of Loreto, in the March of Ancona, than it drew to itself the fervent devotion and pious aspiration of all, and as the ages rolled on, it maintained this devotion ever ardent. . . . May all people, and especially the Italians, understand what manner of gift from God this is; by how great an act of divine providence it was snatched from an unworthy domination; and with what a manifestation of love it was given to them. For in that most blessed House took place the beginnings of man's salvation, by the great and admirable mystery of God made Man. . . . From that August Sanctuary there has flowed into the Church a great abundance of divine grace and a great influence for holiness; there also a considerable number of saints have either felt their hearts inflamed for the first time with the

3. Whether the miracles wrought at Loreto prove the miraculous translation is a point on which the judgment of the Church carries greater weight than that of any private individual. "*Continua miraculorum virtute comprobatur*, it is proved by virtue of the miracles continually wrought there," are the words we read in the Office of the Feast. As for the miracles wrought at St. Anne de Beaupre, they do but attest the value and excellence of the devotion to St. Anne. In matter of fact, it was years after miracles began to be worked at the shrine that a relic of St. Anne was brought thither.<sup>(1)</sup>

4. "Although the miracle is supposed to have taken place in 1291, the first Pope to mention it is Julius II, in 1507." This is not so. Paul II. speaks of it in an Apostolic Letter bearing date November, 1464, and in a second document of the same nature, dated February, 1471, declares that in "the Church of the Blessed Mary at Loreto, according to testimonies most worthy of credit, are preserved the House of the glorious Virgin, and also her Image, borne thither in the mercy of God by the hands of angels."<sup>2</sup>

love of pre-eminent virtue or their desire after perfection quickened.

"That which stood forth before the eyes of our devout forefathers as the glory and support of their faith, the desire and joy of their piety, and a most effective means of imploring the divine mercy, ought to remain so in our age, especially since everything in the world is in a state of degeneracy and disorganization, and nowhere else than in religion can there be found a sure support and alleviation."

(1) Cf. *Manual of Devotion to Good St. Anne*, Quebec, 1891, pp. 7 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Loreto: the New Nazareth*, Art and Book Company, London, 1895; p. 56. Also Bened. XIV, *De Serv. Dei Beatif. et Beat. Canoniz* 1, 4, pars 2, c. 10. Also *Sopra La S. Casa di Loreto*, by Mgr. Bartolini, p. 96.



As for the words of Pope Julius *ut pie creditur, et fama est*, they are not correctly rendered into English by "pious legend," as Father Conway has it, but signify rather, "as is piously believed and spoken of on every hand." A "legend," in the commonly received sense, contains but a grain or two of fact to an ounce of fable. So far is Pope Julius from esteeming the account of the miraculous translation legendary that he confirms, in the same Apostolic Letter, the privileges and indulgences bestowed upon the sanctuary by his predecessors, and, withdrawing it from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Recanati, places it under the immediate protection of the Apostolic See.<sup>1</sup> Now the reason for these special exemptions and privileges as expressly laid down in the Letter of Julius, is the belief that in that sanctuary "the Blessed Virgin herself was conceived, and brought up, and greeted by the angel, and at his word conceived the Saviour of the world."<sup>2</sup> Would the Pope have granted such exceptional privileges to the shrine if he regarded the belief in question as founded on a legend?

5. "Benedict XIV., the first Pope who attempts, as a private theologian, to prove the miraculous translation, cites those who hold the contrary opinion without blaming them in the least." I fear that Father Conway, here as elsewhere, has allowed himself to be misled by his guides. I have read every line that Benedict has written in the place to which the reference is given,<sup>3</sup> and can find no sort of warrant for the statement quoted above. What Benedict says is that he "cannot refrain from dealing at

<sup>1</sup> *Sopra la Santa Casa di Loreto*, pp. 96-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *De Festis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, cap. 16.

some length with the allegation of certain persons who, to win for themselves the name of clever and learned men, mutter with mouths half-open that this narrative is not endorsed by critics of sound judgment and high standing—*sapientioribus magnigne nominis criticis hujus non probari veritatem historiae.*” He then goes on to cite unequivocal testimonies in support of it from writers of repute, of whom some were critical scholars of the first rank. They include the Bollandists (under March 25), Natalis Alexander, Theophilus Raynaud, Baillet, Honoratus a Sancta Maria, Graveson, Guido Grandus, Muratorius, Quaresmius. Elsewhere <sup>1</sup> he cites in the same sense older and not less distinguished writers, viz., Baronius (ad annum 9), Canisius, and Blondius, who was secretary of Pope Eugenius IV. Had Father Conway himself perused what Benedict has to say in these two works, together with his critical dissertation on the same subject in l. 3, c. 10 of the latter of the two, he would hardly have ventured to characterize as an “attempt to prove” the concise yet masterly summing up and sifting of the evidence in favor of the miraculous translation which we have from the pen of one who was perhaps the most learned Pope that ever sat in the Chair of Peter.

## II.

It is now time we dealt with the case made out against the miraculous translation by the learned Barnabite, De Feis. He argues, we are told, “from the standpoint of historical criticism.” This is a bit of information to be thankful for. It is a distinct advantage to know precisely the position of one’s opponent and the weapon with which he fights. We

<sup>1</sup>*De Serv. Dei Beatif.* l. 4, pars 2, c. 10.

are all of us now familiar with the aims and methods of this new school of criticism. It strives for nothing less than the overthrow of Tradition and the setting up for itself of a throne upon its ruins. The Church of the living God, with her voice that speaks out of the hoary past, with her age-long memory of doctrines taught and devotions practised and beliefs cherished and miracles wrought during the chequered course of her pilgrimage upon the earth, is now summoned before the bar of Historical Criticism, and bidden to produce documentary proof of every truth that she teaches and every tradition that she vouches for. Her Creed, which she received from the lips of the Apostles, this criticism denies to be of apostolic origin, and refers to an ancient, indeed, but unknown, if not unknowable, source. Her Sacraments, subjected to its tests, are found to be fewer than the sacrosanct number instituted by the Saviour. Her belief in the corporal assumption of the Blessed Mary, tried by rigid rule of documentary process, is traceable to the apocryphal fables of the post-apostolic age. Nay, the Sacred Scripture itself, which she delivers to men as God's unerring Word, this new criticism, in its "higher" form, discovers to be but a crazy patchwork of many colours, in which truth and error, history and folklore and midrash, are all bound up together in a literary tangle which it proclaims to be its own special office and high prerogative to unravel. Traditions dear to countless generations of Christians must, before its cold advancing light, recede into the shadowy region of fable. The sweet and tender things of the treasured past, after which the Christian heart still yearns, turn bitter at its touch, or melt into nothingness. The little ones of Christ cry for bread, and Historical Criticism tenders them a stone.



*The truth at any cost*, this is the proud motto of the new school. Be it so. So say we all of us. But there are things in heaven and earth that are not dreamt of in its philosophy, nor attainable by its methods. These methods, as employed in the present case, shall be judged by their fruits. We are assured that the miraculous translation of the Holy House has been pronounced a purely popular legend by competent Catholic scholars for three reasons. I will take these reasons in the order given.

1. The sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin at Loreto was in existence long before the so-called translation of 1291.

To this I answer: (1) Suppose there was a sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin at the present Loreto before 1291, it does not follow that it was the one now venerated as the Holy House. (2). The tradition regarding the Holy House stands until it is disproved, and the pre-existence of a sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin at that place would be, at most, but presumptive evidence of its identity with the present one. (3). Such presumption all but vanishes in view of the fact that, in Amati's Geographical Dictionary of Italy, no fewer than twenty-three places are called Loreto, Loretto, Loreta.<sup>1</sup> (4.) "The Bishop of Humana gave, January 4, 1194, the Camalduli of Fonte Avellana a Church called *Sancta Maria in fundo Loreti*."<sup>2</sup> The date corresponds with that found in one of the documents mentioned by Father De Feis, and the title as well. But Mr. Garratt proves conclusively that this could not have

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Loreto: the New Nazareth*, p. 435.

<sup>2</sup> loc. cit.

been the church that contains the *Santa Casa*.<sup>1</sup> (5). The presumption of identity is upset by a counter-presumption founded on the fact, established by actual observation and experiment, that the Holy House stands, without foundations, on what was once a public highway, and is built of stone and mortar, not indigenous to the soil of Italy, but identical with the stone round about Nazareth and the mortar found in the Sacred Cave in front of which the House of Loreto first stood, where the foundations of it may be still traced at this day.<sup>2</sup>

But the Papal documents gathered by Vogel are said to prove clearly that the shrine of Loreto was venerated long before the close of the thirteenth century. It must be remembered that Loreto was the name of a district in the diocese of Recanati before the present town of that name existed. "The inhabitants of the district of Loreto," writes Mr. Garratt, M. A., in the little work now often quoted, "in the Middle Ages were very devout towards the Blessed Virgin. The church of S. Mary in Fundo Loreti having disappeared, it seems, before the year 1249, we find, in 1285, another church called this time Sancta Maria de Laureto. This again must not be mistaken for the *Santa Casa*; for the Bishop had possessions joining this church, while the hill on which the Holy House is situated was the property of the town of Recanati."<sup>3</sup> Since Vogel gathered together these papal documents it is singular, or rather it is significant, that he does not appear to have himself gathered from them the inference which is said to be so plain. Monsignor, afterwards

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.* p. 436, *footnote*.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 22-35. Also, the work already cited, by Mgr. Bartolini, who personally verified this interesting fact.

<sup>3</sup> *Loreto the New Nazareth*, pp. 436-7.

Cardinal. Bartolini quotes him, in the pamphlet already cited, as mentioning, with evident signs of acceptance, the official document, drawn up at Recanati on the return of the deputation of sixteen persons who were sent in 1296 to Tersatto and Nazareth to verify the fact of the miraculous translation. In a footnote I transcribe his words as given by Bartolini.<sup>1</sup>

“Moreover, the older Popes (Urban VI., Boniface IX., Eugenius IV., Paul II., Sixtus IV.), who granted indulgences and privileges to the shrine of Loreto, either do not mention the translation at all, or refer to it as a pious opinion (Julius II., Paul III.).” I have already remarked upon the unscholarliness, not to say unfairness, of making “*pie creditur*” mean “pious legend” or “pious opinion.” The Popes never have been in the habit of issuing Briefs in favour of devotions resting on what they regarded as mere opinions or legends. Belief is not opinion, and the

<sup>1</sup> “L’illustre critico Canonico Giusenpe Wogel, morto nel 1817, ne’ suoi *Annali e Memorie* MM. SS., parlando della spediaione dei Picenzti, egli si fa a dire.—An. 1296. Documentum hujus anni citatur ab Hieronymo Angelita, Turcellinio, etc., sed periisse iliud credo. Continebat testimonia authentica sexdecim virorum noblium, quos ex universo Piceno missos in Palestinam referunt ad exploranda translationis veritatem. His nuntiis, inquit Honoratus a S. Maria (in *animadvers. ad regul. et usum Critices* tom. 2, p. 275) legitimum actum confectum fuit. . . . Anno 1566 vir quidam patritius Recinatensis nomine Bernardinus Leopardius, Juris Doctor, quoddam exemplum istorum apud se retinebat.—A. D. 1296.—A Document of this date is cited by Jerome Angelita, Tursellini, and others, but I believe it has perished. It contained the testimonies of sixteen men of high standing in society, from every part of Picenum, who, as they relate, were sent to Palestine to inquire into the truth of the translation. From their report, says Honoratus a S. Maria, a document was drawn up with due legal formality. . . . In the year 1596, a certain patrician of Recanati, Bernard Leopardius by name, possessed a copy of this document.”

fact of its being declared "pious" by the Vicars of Christ ought not to lessen the respect of His priests for it. But this by the way. Among the Popes here spoken of as not mentioning the translation at all is Paul II., who issued two Apostolic Letters on the subject of the Holy House, one in November, 1464, the other in February, 1471, in the latter of which he declares distinctly, in words already cited, that it was borne to Loreto "in the mercy of God by the hands of angels." Surely this furnishes the motive of the indulgences and privileges granted to the same shrine by the immediate predecessors as well as successors of the Pontiff. In matter of fact he himself, in the preface to his Brief, cites the testimonies of Urban VI., Boniface IX., and Martin V., (Cf. Horatii Tursellini *Historia Lauretana*, ed. of 1837, page 71). The tradition, or as Pope Julius expresses it, the *fame* of the miraculous translation was widespread long before the Popes returned from Avignon to Rome.<sup>1</sup>

2. There is no contemporary evidence whatever of the pretended translation.

This is far from the truth. "In the summer of the year of the Translation to Tersatto, the four delegates of Count Frangipani went to Nazareth, and in 1296 the sixteen Italian delegates made the same journey."<sup>2</sup> They took with them measurements of the Holy House and found them to correspond ex-

<sup>1</sup> The Popes who resided at Avignon from 1303 to 1377 were hindered from visiting Loreto, and the schism from 1378 to 1417 occasioned still further delay in the development of this devotion. The Blessed Urban V., the only Pope who returned from Avignon for a time, made preparations for the journey to Loreto, but we have no certain proof that he carried out his intention.—*Loretto: the New Nazareth*, p. 53, in footnote.

<sup>2</sup> *Loretto: the New Nazareth*, p. 216.



actly with those of the foundations that were to be seen in front of the Sacred Cave at Nazareth. Documents were drawn up on their return, both at Tersatto and at Recanati, setting forth the facts thus established. True, these documents are no longer extant, the originals having perished in a fire. But they, or copies of them, were in the hands of the historians who wrote the first account of the translation.<sup>1</sup> "The loss of these annals matters little," observes Benedict XIV., "... for we ought to have confidence in distinguished historians such as Angelita and Tursellini, who had them in their hands when they wrote their narration, and drew their accounts from them after the manner of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who composed his work on Roman antiquities, after having prepared it for twenty-four years, partly by conversation with learned men, partly by consulting the memoirs of distinguished writers of preceding ages. And is not Dionysius a great authority, although the documents he consulted have disappeared!"<sup>2</sup> This, I submit, is true historical criticism, constructive, not destructive; a criti-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mgr. Bartolini's work, pp. 22, 23.

<sup>2</sup> *De Serv. Dei Beatif.* l. 3, c. 10, n. 5. That Benedict did regard as blameworthy those who called in question the miraculous translation appears again from the words we read in this place. He begins his critical review of the evidence by saying that there "are not wanting men who have dared to set down as purely legendary the account of the translation of the Holy House — *inter fabulas ausi sint recensere* — because of the lack of contemporary evidence." He then quotes Guido Grandæus as affirming (*dissert.* 3, c. 8, n. 12), that documents of unquestionable authenticity existed which were drawn up a few years after the coming of the Holy House to Italy; also, Antonius Salt, in a work entitled *Sanctuarium Lauretanum*, and a historical dissertation by George Francis Xavier Marotti, both of whom testify to the existence of parallel contemporary evidence in the annals of Fiume, touching the translation of the Holy House to the Illyrian shores.

cism, constructive not destructive; a criticism which takes account of the truth of testimony rather than of the frail and perishable vehicle which conveys it from generation to generation; a criticism which is willing to assume that reputable men are not liars until they are proved by indisputable evidence to be so.<sup>1</sup> The comment on these delegations that we find in Father Conway's article, "Everything, of course, turns out as they desire," is in keeping with the spirit and temper of what passes to-day for historical criticism. But if all historical accounts that can not be verified by original documents are to be treated in the same contemptuous fashion, how much of what the world has hitherto received as historically true can be proved to be so?

3. Many pilgrims to the Holy Land, from the seventh to the seventeenth century, visited the house of the Blessed Virgin at Nazareth, and their accounts prove:

(a) That the house at Loreto and the house at Nazareth are not identical.

<sup>1</sup> The following words of Cicero (*Pro Archia Poeta*, c. 8), spoken in a parallel case, are to the point: Hic tu tabulas desideras Heracleensium publicas, quas Italico bello, incenso tabulario, interisse scimus omnes. Est ridiculum, ad ea, quae habemus, nihil dicere; quaerere, quae habere non possumus: et de hominum memoria tacere, literarum memoriam flagitare; et cum haec eas amplissimi viri religionem, integerimi municipii ius iurandum fidemque, ea quae depravari nullo modo possunt, repudiare, tabulas, quas idem dicis solere corrumpi, desiderare.—Here you ask for the public registers of the Heracleans, which we all know to have perished in the Italian war, the archives having been destroyed by fire. It is ridiculous to attach no weight to the proofs we have, and to ask for proofs that we cannot have; to be silent concerning men's testimony, and on to insist on the testimony of records. And, whereas you have the conscientious testimony of a most honourable man, and the sworn declaration of a most respectable municipality, it is absurd, I say, to reject these evidences which can in no wise be corrupted, and to ask for registers which you yourself admit are often tampered with.

(b) That the house at Nazareth was still in Nazareth long after its pretended translation into Italy.

This Father Conway calls the strongest argument against the translation of the Holy House; and not without reason. So strong is it, indeed, that one can not but marvel why it should have been deemed needful to use any other. This were beyond all question a short and sure cut to the coveted goal; for it is physically impossible that the same house should be in two places at the same time. The fact that other arguments are actually brought forward creates a suspicion that there must be some flaw, some weak spot, in this the strongest of all of them. To begin with, it would be interesting to know whether the words of the witnesses since 1291 can be cited to-day at first-hand for us, and whether the original documents containing their several testimonies are still extant. Let us suppose that even one trustworthy witness could be found to depose on oath that he saw with his own eyes the Virgin's house at Nazareth after it was said to have been removed to Loreto, can we believe that the Catholic world would still put faith in the miracle, or that Popes would affirm it as unequivocally as many of them do? But let us cross-question the only two of those witnesses whose testimonies are cited for us.

We may, therefore, ask with the celebrated Franciscan, Quaresmius: How could the Holy House be in both the East and the West at the same time?

A very proper question. I observe, in passing, that Quaresmius was celebrated as an author rather than as a traveller or pilgrim. He was, however, in the Holy Land as commissary of his Order, after 1620. And he had before him while he wrote documents and published works that are no longer extant. In tom. 2. of his *Elucidatio Terrae Sanctae*,

l. 7, c. 4, he sets himself to answer the question cited above, and quotes with approval the testimony of John Francis Alcarot who, in his *Itinerarium Terrae Sanctae* l. 2, c. 19, affirms that the Holy House was miraculously removed from Nazareth to Dalmatia, thence to Loreto, but that the faithful in Palestine had built a church, under the title of the Annunciation of the Blessed Mary, which inclosed the site where stood the Holy House, and that this was the Holy House which was now said to be in Nazareth.<sup>1</sup>

I have intimated that Quaresmius diligently compiled and collated the testimonies of those who visited the Holy Land. One very valuable testimony he cites for us in bk. 7, ch. 4, of the work above referred to. It is that of Father Thomas da Novara, of the Franciscan Minors, who became Guardian of the Holy Places in 1620, having obtained a permit from the Prince of Sidon, Emir-Faschereddin, in whose principedom Nazareth then was. Nigh three hundred years before, the Minors had been driven thence by the Saracens, and now for the first time gained a permanent foothold there. They found that the Chapel of the Angel, which had been built in 1300 by the Franciscans themselves on the site where stood the Holy House, was falling into ruins, and having determined to rebuild it, "pulled down the old walls to their foundations; and then, having diligently and carefully examined them, found the foundations of the Holy House of Loreto two palms in thickness, and separate from the other foundations [i. e. those of the Chapel of the Angel built on the spot]. . . . Leaving these and beginning at the ancient and true foundations, on drawing the measuring line from it,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Benedict XIV., *De Festo Translat. Domus Lauret.*,  
ii. 13.



the place at Nazareth was found, to the great joy of all, in all things equal to the place of the Holy House at Loreto. . . . And so what for a long time people desired to know, some from a motive of piety, others from curiosity, or in order to ascertain the truth, is in this our day made clearer than the noonday sun.”<sup>1</sup>

And now for the other witness :

Nearly 150 years before him, Suriano, who made three visits to the Holy Land (1480-1514) spoke of the ignorant people of his day who falsely declared the Holy House of Loreto to be the authentic house of the Blessed Virgin. He declared that the house he had himself seen at Nazareth was made of different materials altogether, and could not have been carried away without carrying away the rock of which it formed a part.

It does not need a very searching cross-examination of this witness to elicit the fact that, if his words are correctly reported, it is he who is ignorant. In the first place he is unaware (and not being, I take it, a prophet nor the son of a prophet, could not have been aware) that Professor Razzi, of the Sapienza, Rome, did in the year 1857, make a scientific analysis of two stones and some mortar from the Sacred Cave, brought from Nazareth by Mgr. Bartolini, and other two stones and mortar taken from the Holy House by special permission of Pope Pius Ninth, and found both samples of stone and mortar to be of the same material—material, by the same token, not indigenous to the soil of Italy, as has already been observed. In the next place, this blundering witness gives away completely the case of those who have summoned him into court. For if it be true, as he declares, that the house which he saw “ could not have been carried away without carrying away the rock of which it

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Mgr. Bartolini, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-60.

formed a part," plain it is that what he saw was the Sacred Cave, and not the House which formerly stood in front of it.<sup>1</sup> But let us grant, for the sake

<sup>1</sup> John Phocas, a Greek monk, who visited Nazareth just about one hundred years before the translation of the Holy House, describes what he saw in such a way as to indicate plainly that the rock in which was the grotto formed no part of the House. "Having entered by an aperture into the cave," he writes, "you descend a few steps and then behold that ancient House of Joseph in which, as I have said, the Archangel proclaimed the glad tidings to the Virgin upon her return from the fountain."—Cited by Mgr. Bartolini, *op. cit.* pp. 38-9. "He properly describes it as the House of Joseph," observes Bartolini, "because, being head of the family, he was reckoned the owner of it by Jewish law, although it appertained to the Virgin Mary as her dowry."—p. 40. Had the assailants of the tradition cited for us the words of the other witnesses to whose *itineraria* they make appeal, it would be easily seen that those pilgrims or visitors to Nazareth mistook for the Holy House either the Chapel of the Angel built on the site of it, or, like Suriano, the Cave in front of which it stood. Moreover, the *itineraria* lend themselves to quotation in support of the tradition. I transcribe, with references, some testimonies from Mr. Garratt's book, pp. 216-20:

In the summer of the year of the Translation to Tersatto, the four delegates of Count Frangipani went to Nazareth, and in 1296 the sixteen Italian delegates made the same journey. They saw on one of the walls of the formerly beautiful basilica an inscription relating the departure of the Holy House.\*

Four years later. A. D. 1300, Franciscan Fathers took up their abode at Nazareth and built a chapel on the site of the Holy House. They also erected *three altars* for the celebration of the Holy Mass.† The basilica a little after that time is described as "almost destroyed," and Mahomedan soldiers kept guard over the Holy Place.‡ An alms-box was placed

\* "In uno pariete ibi prope est scriptum et sculptum in muro, quomodo ista ecclesia fuit ibi, et postea recessit." See Teremanus, *Translatio mirae Ecclesiae B. Mariae Virginis de Loreto*.

† Sanutus Torsellus, A. D. 1306.

‡ William Baldensel, 1337.

of argument, that what he saw at Nazareth was really the Holy House. And let us, at the same time, keep in mind the learned guess put forward on the same page of the *Catholic World* whereon his words are quoted, that the House at Loreto is a reproduction or facsimile of the one which Suriano saw at

near a column of the church to receive the offerings of pilgrims.\* The Franciscans remained there unmolested till A. D. 1365, when Mahomedan intolerance drove them out for a period of one hundred and three years, during which the Sanctuary remained "desolate,† and the *Chapel of the Angel* fell into ruins."‡

About 1473, Jerome of Radiolo relates in his account of the Holy House of Nazareth (dedicated to Lawrence of Medicis, styled the Magnificent, or the Father of Literature): "All those who have visited the Holy Land from pious motives declare with one mouth that this is the Chamber in which the Archangel S. Gabriel appeared from Heaven to the Virgin Mary, and that it was brought hither to save it from profanation at the hands of the Mahomedans. The Sanctuary of Loreto is the first of all the temples of Mary, Mother of God, and the most adorned with votive offerings."

The Franciscan Fathers, who had been driven out of Nazareth in 1365, were able to return in 1468; and in 1509 Anselm of Poland, Observantine, attests that when at Nazareth he was told that the chapel, in which the Archangel Gabriel announced the Incarnation of the Son of God to the Blessed Virgin, had been translated from that place to Loreto by the ministry of angels.§

Again, in the first half of the same century, the three delegates of Pope Clement VII. declared on oath that they had found the measurements at Nazareth to correspond exactly with those at Loreto. Of great help to them in their researches were the Franciscan Fathers, who had been back in Nazareth since 1468. The Fathers were obliged to leave it again soon after, in 1542; but we possess an account written by Sir John Zullard,|| a Flemish knight, in 1586:—"One descends twelve steps, and there are the foundations

\* Sir John Maundeville, A. D. 1350.

† Bernard of Brandenburg, A. D. 1427.

‡ *Topographia Terrae Promissionis*, A. D. 1463.

§ *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae*. Cracow, 1514.

|| *Viaggio a Gerusalem*. Rome. 1586.

Nazareth, some two hundred years after the real House is said to have been carried away by angels. It will only remain to invite our learned friends to make the journey to Loreto, and examine for themselves the House which stands there,—not as forming part of a rock, not even as abutting upon a rock,—but without foundations, on what was once a public road. They will there learn, we may devoutly hope, to eschew guesswork in the things of the unseen world. And they will learn to respect the simple faith that has furrowed the marble round about the hallowed Sanctuary where the Word was made Flesh—that simple faith which, even in the order of nature, is accounted to be more than Norman blood. On no foundation of stone stands Mary's earthly Home by the shores of the Adriatic. It stands, and has stood these six hundred years and more, on the childlike faith of the little ones she begot in agony at the foot of the Cross.

I have not even attempted to bring forward the evidence in favour of the miraculous translation. My one purpose has been to meet the main objections raised against it. The case for the defence is a complex one, made up as it is of many minute threads of evidence requiring to be tested, one by one, before they can be woven into a complete demonstration. Nothing less than a volume would do it justice. But there is one thing I must not omit doing, in conclusion, and that is to call attention to the signal

of the House of S. Joseph, in which the Lord was brought up and nourished; the rest of which was miraculously transported by the angels, and is at present in the city of Loreto."

Andricomius, writing on the Holy Land in 1590, says that the House of the Blessed Virgin was carried by angels to Fiume, and thence to Loreto, where its four walls stand without foundations.



unfairness of making the case for the miraculous translation appear to rest largely on the reality of the vision said to have been vouchsafed to the parish priest of St. George's Church, Tersatto. This has nothing whatever to do with the fact of the translation, considered historically. The question that concerns us is not whether the Blessed Virgin really appeared and spoke to Alexander de Giorgio (who by the way, is described by Farlatus as *antistes*, which Glavinich and Pascomius take to signify his cure of souls, not his charge of a diocese), but whether her earthly Home was carried by angels to Tersatto, and thence to Loreto. As for the words she is supposed to have spoken to him, I note a singular lack of fidelity to the Latin original in the version commented upon by the Abbe Boudinhon, which may not be altogether without a purpose. Thus *sacris initiavit* of Tursellini is rendered "built," which might imply that St. Peter himself set up the altar, whereas he did but dedicate it to sacred uses. Again, the closing words, "I wish you to announce it to the world and as a reward I give you back your health," is a perversion rather than a translation of *Caeterum, ut horum tu ipse sis testis idem praecoque, sanus esto. Tua ex longinquo morbo subita valetudo fidem miraculi faciet. Nostra (effigies)* is translated "(statue) of myself and the Infant Jesus," whereupon the Abbe comments, "whom St. Luke certainly never saw in His Mother's arms." It is neither said nor implied that he did. Neither is it said nor implied nor even hinted in the remotest way that "the Apostles lived in Nazareth." What is said is that the Apostles (or some of them) consecrated there the House of the Virgin, after her death, and there celebrated the Holy Sacrifice.

The Abbe Boudinhon, and those who are of one mind with him, may say that here is much ado about a thing of very little consequence. "What difference does it make," he asks "whether or not we can say at Loreto or at Nazareth: '*Here* the Word was made Flesh,' provided the Christian enliven his faith and his piety by meditating upon the sublime doctrine of the Incarnation?" Were the Christian a pure spirit, or an inhabitant of some other planet, it might make no difference at all. But as the Christian is a human being, a creature of flesh and blood, and as his present home is upon this earth, it makes all the difference in the world. As well might it be asked: What difference does it make to the exile, on coming back after many years to the spot that is dearest to him on earth, whether or not the cottage that stands before him is the home of his childhood? Meditation, no matter how pious or how profound, can never bridge over the gulf between truth and fable. The real, as opposed to the fancied or the false, is to devotion the soul-food on which it feeds. And so "to us Nazareth and its Holy House, exiled, wandering, and angel-borne, Syrian, Dalmatian, Italian, all by turns, are consecrated places, doubly consecrated by their old memories, and also by their strange continued life of local graces and the efficacious balm of a Divine Presence, awful and undecayed."—F. W. Faber, *Bethlehem*, chap. 2, p. 66.

ALEX. MACDONALD, D. D., V. G.  
Chaplain of the Holy House.

NEW YORK, December 12, 1905.

The Right Reverend John Cameron, D. D.,  
Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

DEAR AND MOST REVEREND BISHOP:—

Your letter of December 4th, which was accompanied by an article on the Holy House of Loreto, would have been acknowledged earlier, had I not been out of town for some days.

Yesterday I received the letter, and after reading it, I hastened to read the article by Dr. MacDonald, wishing to comply with your request: that it be published in the January *Catholic World*.

I had not read far in the article when I was most painfully surprised. Because of what I read, I feel sure that Your Lordship did not yourself read the article, and I do not believe you would recommend its publication, as it stands.

The writer of the article says: that by the publication of Father Conway's article "the authoritative judgment of the Holy See is in question." This certainly brings up a matter that is infinitely more important than any particular article. It is a statement to which I, as editor of the *Catholic World*, and the Paulist Community which has entrusted me with that editorship, take a most decided and emphatic exception.

The *Catholic World*, during all the forty years of its existence, has been faithful to its name and its work, the defence of our holy Church, and the honor and authority of the Vicar of Christ on earth.

As editor of the *Catholic World*, I do not myself,

necessarily, share in, nor do I hold myself responsible for, all the opinions expressed in its pages. If it represented but one man, it would be unlearned and ineffective indeed. Nevertheless, as editor, I do hold myself bound, beyond all question of doubt, to see to it that nothing appears in its pages that would bring, or tend to bring, into question the teachings of our divine faith, or the honor and authority of its Supreme Guardian on earth.

The article, which your letter accompanied, states that I have permitted this. Insinuations of a like meaning are made here and there throughout the article. The statement and the insinuations are false. I feel sure, as I have said, that you are not cognizant of them. I do not think that Dr. MacDonald has consciously reflected on what he has written.

The question of the Holy House of Loreto, as your own kind letter implies, I believe to be an open one. An article written in the spirit of which your own letter speaks, when it says: "Years ago I made a careful study of the subject touching the miraculous translation of the Holy House of Loreto, and satisfied myself that it was a historical fact," and written against the conclusions of Father Conway's translation, would be gladly accepted and published by me.

Under the circumstances, I do not feel that I have any liberty to edit Dr. MacDonald's article.

I thank Your Lordship for your thoughtful words about the value of the *Catholic World*, and I remain, with best wishes and sincere esteem,

Most respectfully yours in Christ,

JOHN J. BURKE, C. S. P.,  
Editor.



ST. ANDREW'S, Antigonish Co.,  
Nova Scotia, Dec. 27, 1905.

REV. AND DEAR FATHER,—

His Lordship sent me the letter in which you decline the article on the Holy House of Loreto which he forwarded to you for publication. That article was written by me at his especial request, and I myself read to him every word of it. Your assurance that he failed to acquaint himself with what he asked you to publish has no foundation. It is a gratuitous assumption, to put it mildly.

You have published an article which discredits the received account of the miraculous translation of the Holy House, and even goes the length of affirming that all the evidence it contains is "made out of whole cloth." The account is vouched for by the Vicars of Christ in official documents. The case made against it in your columns is seemingly a strong one; in fact, priests who spoke to me after having read the article thought it conclusive. I put it to you, then, whether the respect you owe to the judgment of the Holy See, your duty to your readers, loyalty to the truth, to say nothing of common fairness, did not demand that you should give the defence of a time-honored tradition, dear to successive generations of Christians, the same publicity that you gave the attack upon it.

You make me say that, by the publication of Father Conway's article the authoritative judgment of the Holy See is in question. That would be to give undue importance to the article. What I do say—and my words are plain—is that there is ques-

tion of the authority of the Church, in that the Holy See has repeatedly pronounced upon the matter.

I have been careful to point out that such pronouncement, though authoritative, does not bear the character of an infallible utterance. I have therefore neither stated nor insinuated that you, as editor, have permitted to appear in the *Catholic World* any thing "that would bring or tend to bring, into question, the teachings of our divine faith, or the honor and authority of its Supreme Guardian on earth." You charge me with falsehood in stating and insinuating what I neither state nor insinuate.

The words you quote from his Lordship's letter do not contain the implication you profess to find in them. This would be even plainer had you given them in full, as I here give them: "Years ago I made a careful study of the subject touching the miraculous translation of the Holy House of Loreto, and satisfied myself that it was a historical fact, not a mere legend." It is open to any one to examine the grounds on which a judgment of the Holy See is based.

I regret for your own sake, as well as for the sake of the distinguished body you represent, that you refuse to let the defence speak for itself in the columns that conveyed the attack. This were but elementary justice. In the circumstances, it must seem a bit of unconscious irony for you to call this an "open question." His Lordship, as I have said, has sent me your letter, and has left me free to make what use of it I see fit. I remain,

Very sincerely yours in Christ,

ALEX. MACDONALD, D. D., V. G.





